

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strike through~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

9. (currently amended) An apparatus for feeding flat items to a friction/suction-type separating arrangement, comprising:

~~an abutment surface supporting the items standing in a stack on a narrow side;~~
a stop surface configured to align the items;
a conveying means configured to transport the items to a withdrawal location;
at least one friction-type withdrawal means driven in a controlled manner, and having a region configured to act upon the items;

at least one suction head connected to a negative-pressure source and positioned in proximity of the region so that the region is between the items and the suction head;

a sensor coupled to the suction head to measure a negative pressure in the suction head; ~~and~~

a drive control device coupled to the conveying means and configured to control the conveying means, wherein the drive control device activates the conveying means in dependence of the negative pressure; and

wherein the drive control device comprises means for setting a speed of the conveying means as an inverse proportion of negative pressure measured.

10. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the drive control device comprises means for displacing the conveying means at a substantially constant speed if the negative pressure drops below a defined value, and for stopping the conveying means if another defined negative pressure is exceeded.

11. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 9, wherein measured values of the sensor are integrated over time and the conveying means is displaced in accordance with current integrated values.

12. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 11, wherein mean values are formed from the measured values of the sensor and the conveying means is displaced in accordance with current mean values.

13. (cancelled)

14. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 9, further comprising a plurality of successively arranged suction heads for high items, each of the suction heads comprising a sensor and being coupled to the drive control device for determining an inclined position and driving the conveying means in dependence of the inclined position.

15. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the apparatus is configured to measure the heights of the items and to disregard negative pressures of suction heads that are only partially covered.

16. (currently amended) The apparatus according to claim 9, further comprising a circulating withdrawal belt with suction openings arranged as a friction-type withdrawal means, with ~~the~~a negative pressure of ~~the~~a downstream suction head acting, via ~~the~~suction openings, on ~~the~~a respectively foremost item.